

## **Sufferance and Self-identification in Anita Desai's Voices in the City**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The conditions of women's lives in the family and society are convert in the book of Voices in the City. This embodies the voice of female rage, female terror, and female freedom-seeking. In this book, Anita Desai meticulously highlights the difficulties faced by women. Desai is renowned for exploring the inner life of women. She constantly uses books to delve into the minds of her female characters. She also discusses how people interact with one another and how free they are to live their lives as they see fit. This paper focuses on women's struggle for freedom amidst traditional culture and self-centered society, as portrayed in the characters of Monisha, who suffers within her traditional joint family, and Amla, who seeks to find her self-identification in a challenging and self-centered society.

**Keyword:** Women, sufferance, self-identification, traditional join family, self-centered society.

### **Sufferance and Self-identification in Anita Desai's Voices in the City**

One of the leading figures in the field of female writers is Anita Desai. Her books accurately portray the idea that women require more than just shelter, clothing, and food. Anita Desai is a renowned Indian novelist who is well known for her intriguing novel, which explores the negative consequences of life on an Indian family as well as the complexities of Indian society. Desai is one of the Indian authors who has used her writing to try and alter modern society. She is renowned for accurately capturing the inner thoughts and sentiments of her female characters. A detailed examination of Anita Desai's writings exposes how her fight for female liberty was framed by patriarchal cultural norms. Feminism is the idea that women ought to have the same opportunities, power, and rights as men. Feminists want women to be in charge of their own lives. Anita Desai's books primarily focus on women. In an Indian patriarchal, patrilineal, and fatherdominated family, her feminine figure looks to be a victim. The Indian woman is shown by Anita Desai as a warrior, a victim, a heroine, and in later novels, a winner thanks to her unflappable spirit and willingness to compromise. She has portyed both types of women: those who are potent agents of retreat, regression, decay, death, and diversion; and those who are symbols of growth and change.

*“Voices in the city” is one of the best novels written by her which comprises different characters with negative prospects. In the novel there is conflict in the psyche of the characters resulting in frustration. Due to sensitiveness their personal relationship becomes worse full and for which they*

*seek neurotic solutions in their problems*” (08). Desai writes about a domestic world with a focus of examine deep into the inside of mind. Anita Desai’s *Voices in the city*, she views the two sisters’ struggle, trouble, ridiculed, and sorrows face in traditional family and self-centered society. She clearly shows that both are trying to find meaning in their lives and both characters are different way of perspective in their lives.

'Voices in the City' mentally analyzes Monisha's traits to show the world of a woman's nature. She divulges Monisha's innermost thoughts, which were documented in her diary. Monisha's personal experience is reflected in both her collective voice and the voice of the Indian Women. Desai makes an effort to concentrate on the sensitive nature of the woman who is trying to flee the repressive society. The novel presents of marital discord. Monisha is not high educated women, and she marries Jiban and enters a new phase of life. Silence plays an important role in her life. Monish's husband is a product of the traditional culture. He thinks that a woman's most important job is to cook, cut vegetables, serve food and brush the hair of small children under the supervision of a step-sister. Monish feels that she is deprived of her privacy. Her husband's job as a mid-level civil servant leaves him little time for Monish and no room for her to express her emotions. Lack of communication is the only thing that connects Monisha with her husband. He doesn't even ask his wife if any money is missing from his pockets. Monisha's marriage is ill-suited to her personality. She is lonely, sterile and suffers from stress due to living in a common household with an unfeeling husband. She is at the end of her rope where all she wants is a meaningful touch from her man. Her husband's verbal silence makes her dull, lonely, and frustrated. She only feels comfortable in her own skin. *“I find on this level that solitude that becomes me most naturally I am willing to accept this status then, and to live here, a little beyond and below everyone else, in exile”* (123). When she comes to live with her in-laws, she goes through the experience of having a surreptitious push from Jiban to touch feet after feet of various people. She has to spend time in the tiered balconies, in the room with the bars of windows, black bed and black wardrobe. The entire description makes it clear that the environment creates cold response and threat in her and makes her feel like a prisoner. She doesn't speak to her husband at all. She's always lonely. Her husband is just average. She suffers all kinds of insults and tortures in the family. The day after her husband leaves, she takes money from his packet. Her uncle and aunt look at her suspiciously. These incidents show the economic dependency of the Indian woman. Her tragedy is a typical case of the educated unemployed woman in our era. She is frustrated, lonely, and her lack of communication with husband makes her life meaningless. The only way out of this life is to accept loneliness and be in exile. She struggles desperately to make sense of her life, but is completely lost. She feels that her life is meaningless, and the only way out for her is to choose between death and meaning life. She realizes that not just her life, but human life as a whole is a riddle that cannot be solved. Her last words are: *“I am turned into a woman who keeps a diary. I do not like a woman who keeps a diary. Traceless meaningless uninvolved does this not amount to non-existence, please?”* (140). Monisha's selfishness causes her to believe that death is the only way out of her suffering, to her confusion and hopelessness. Monisha's inability to deal with her mental illness causes her to commit suicide.

Amla's Characteristics in 'Voice in the City' Amla is the youngest among siblings and suffers from the infection of city. She faces similar problems as her siblings. She is an artist from Mumbai who has settled in Calcutta to pursue her career in commercial art. Calcutta is like a monster for her, she feels that her *“brother and sister are gobbled by the city monster”* (33). While modelling for Dharma she feels a great change in her life. *“Instead of being a commercial artist, she becomes another Amla, a flowering Amla, translucent with joy and overflowing with a sense of love and reward”* (94). Amla loves being part of Dharma's cosmopolitan lifestyle for his daughter, but Amla grows frustrated. Monisha's death shocks her and gives her a fresh perspective on her life, which allows her to accept her boring job and boring life in Kolkata. Amla finds something that makes her happy, even though her boring job at an ad agency doesn't. Even though the city of Kolkata is a monstrosity, she finds solace in creating illustrations for a Pacharatantra translation. Amla's religious side shines through these old Indian fables that convey spiritual and meaningful messages.

## **CONCLUSION:**

This paper follows the lives of the characters as they struggle to make sense of their lives and eventually make it to the end. It's about the women characters who are unhappy with their lives and decide to look for a way to make sense of them. Monisha decides to pour kerosene on herself and burn herself to death, and Amla finally finds her identity in a society that's all about self-absorption. Monisha's death brings them closer to understanding each other, and Anita Desai's use of a girl's death as a sacrificial lamb gives us a new look at Nirode's and Amla's world. Desai shows us how people try to find meaning in life, and sometimes we see them succeed, like Amla, and sometimes we don't, like Monish. It's a really great novel, with lots of light and dark, and life and death.

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